

Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act

This report was prepared pursuant to Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act, which states:

- (b)(1) Each State shall prepare and submit to the Administrator by April 1, 1975, and shall bring up to date by April 1, 1976, and biennially thereafter, a report which shall include—
- (A) a description of the water quality of all navigable waters in such State during the preceding year, with appropriate supplemental descriptions as shall be required to take into account seasonal, tidal, and other variations, correlated with the quality of water required by the objective of this Act (as identified by the Administrator pursuant to criteria published under section 304(a) of this Act) and the water quality described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph;
 - (B) an analysis of the extent to which all navigable waters of such State provide for the protection and propagation of a balanced population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife, and allow recreational activities in and on the water;
 - (C) an analysis of the extent to which the elimination of the discharge of pollutants and a level of water quality which provides for the protection and propagation of a balanced population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife and allows recreational activities in and on the water, have been or will be achieved by the requirements of this Act, together with recommendations as to additional action necessary to achieve such objectives and for what waters such additional action is necessary;
 - (D) an estimate of (i) the environmental impact, (ii) the economic and social costs necessary to achieve the objective of this Act in such State, (iii) the economic and social benefits of such achievement; and (iv) an estimate of the date of such achievement; and
 - (E) a description of the nature and extent of nonpoint sources of pollutants, and recommendations as to the programs which must be undertaken to control each category of such sources, including an estimate of the costs of implementing such programs.
- (2) The Administrator shall transmit such State reports, together with an analysis thereof, to Congress on or before October 1, 1975, and October 1, 1976, and biennially thereafter.

Note that, pursuant to Public Law 104-66, the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995, this *2000 National Water Quality Inventory* is not considered a Report to Congress.



United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Water
Washington DC 20460
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A Message from the Administrator

Christine Todd Whitman



I believe water is the biggest environmental issue we face in the 21st Century in terms of both quality and quantity. In the 30 years since its passage, the Clean Water Act has dramatically increased the number of waterways that once again are safe for fishing and swimming. Nevertheless, as this National Water Quality Inventory report points out, many of the nation's waters still do not meet water quality goals. In particular, polluted runoff from farms and urban areas continues to impair large numbers of our nation's rivers, lakes, estuaries, and coastal waters. Fish and shellfish consumption advisories and swimming restrictions continue to be reported. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its many partners at the federal, state and local level are working together to finish the business of restoring and protecting our nation's waters for present and future generations. Please join with us in meeting the challenges ahead.

Acknowledgments

This report is based primarily on water quality assessments submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by the states, territories, American Indian tribes, the District of Columbia, and interstate commissions of the United States. The EPA wishes to thank the authors of these assessments for the time and effort spent in preparing these reports and reviewing the draft of this national assessment. Additional thanks go to the water quality assessment coordinators from all 10 EPA Regions who work with the states, tribes, and other jurisdictions.

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
WATER

Dear Reader,

This 2000 National Water Quality Inventory report is the 13th in a series published since 1975 under Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. Section 305(b) requires states to describe the quality of their waters; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must then summarize these assessments and transmit that summary report to Congress. Please note that, pursuant to Public Law 104-66 (the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995), this edition of the Inventory is not considered a Report to Congress.

In their 2000 reports, states, tribes and other jurisdictions assessed 19% of the nation's stream miles; 43% of its lake, pond, and reservoir acres; and 36% of its estuarine square miles. The states also assessed the quality of their ocean coastline, Great Lakes shoreline, wetlands, and ground water. The information contained in this report applies only to the waters assessed.

The states found that approximately 60% of assessed stream miles, 55% of assessed lake acres, and 50% of assessed estuarine square miles fully supported the water quality standards set for them, although significant proportions of these waters were threatened and might degrade in the future. The remaining assessed waters were impaired to some degree. Leading causes of impairment reported by the states in 2000 include bacteria, siltation, nutrients, and metals (primarily mercury). Sources of impairment include agricultural activities, hydrologic modifications (such as channelization, dredging, or flow regulation), municipal sources, and urban runoff/storm sewers. The percent of assessed stream and estuarine waters found to be impaired overall has increased somewhat from the last report in 1998, although that difference is more likely due to changes in monitoring approaches than actual water quality degradation.

In 2000, metals (primarily mercury) were the leading cause of impairment in the nation's estuaries (up from third leading cause in 1998); in lakes, metals were again the second leading cause of impairment. Increasingly, states are moving toward more comprehensive examination of fish tissue and are issuing statewide advisories that restrict the consumption of selected fish species, especially for vulnerable segments of the population. Mercury, which originates from air transport from power generating facilities and incinerators, mining, natural rock weathering, and other sources, was cited in approximately 2,240 of the 2,800 fish consumption advisories reported in 2000.

In the past, data collection and interpretation efforts under the Clean Water Act were not always coordinated. The EPA has been working with its partners to streamline and combine Section 305(b) water quality reporting requirements with those of Section 303(d) (which requires states to identify impaired waters and develop allocations of the maximum amount of a pollutant each impaired water can receive and still meet water quality standards). EPA has also developed guidance providing details on water monitoring designs, data quality and data quantity needs, and data interpretation methods under this combined approach. You can learn more about these monitoring initiatives by visiting our website at www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert H. Wayland III".

Robert H. Wayland III
Director, Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds

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